



Connect & Discover

HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

GUIDANCE HANDBOOK BEFORE DURING & AFTER MATERNITY LEAVE



Contents

Welcome from the HR Manager.....	3
1. PREGNANCY AT WORK.....	4
1.1. Looking After Yourself.....	4
1.2. Informing Your Manager.....	4
1.3. Health & Safety.....	4
1.4. Your Rights at Work.....	5
1.5. Antenatal Care.....	5
1.6. Staff on Fixed Term Contracts.....	6
1.7. Maternity Cover.....	6
2. TAKING MATERNITY LEAVE.....	7
2.1. Maternity Leave Entitlement.....	7
2.2. Maternity Pay.....	7
2.3. Pension.....	7
2.4. Holiday Entitlement.....	8
2.5. Keeping in Touch Days.....	8
2.6. Extension of Maternity Leave & Benefits in the Event of Premature Births.....	8
3. RETURNING TO WORK.....	9
3.1. Return Date.....	9
3.2. Breastfeeding.....	9
3.3. Flexible Working.....	9
3.4. Parental Leave.....	9
3.5. Parents Leave.....	10

Welcome from the HR Manager

As a member of the HR team in AIT I am delighted to welcome you to this handbook. This handbook has been developed to provide a comprehensive source of information for employees before, during and after maternity leave. The handbook is supported by a number of policies which are available on the HR page of the AIT website [Click here to access](#)

Pregnancy and childbirth necessitate a break in employment for expectant employees and the way in which this is managed has important implications for those employees and their families. As an employer the Institute recognises the importance of supporting and retaining staff who take maternity leave, and also the impact that taking time out of the workplace to raise a family can have on their careers. With this in mind, AIT has developed a range of policies and initiatives not only to support women while they are on maternity leave but also to support them upon returning to work and reestablishing their careers whilst simultaneously balancing home/work commitments.

I hope you find this information of value and would welcome your feedback.

Liam Brennan

Human Resources Manager

1. PREGNANCY AT WORK

1.1. Looking After Yourself

Continuing to work during your pregnancy is not easy and it is important that you look after yourself in the workplace during this time. In the event of you feeling that some pregnancy related symptoms are affecting your work you should inform your manager as soon as possible. Of course this may mean that you inform your line manager about your pregnancy earlier than you had anticipated, but your first priority is that you should remain healthy and safe while you are at work.

1.2. Informing Your Manager

You must inform your manager and Human Resources in writing of the date you intend to commence maternity leave. This notification must be submitted before the end of the 15th week prior to your baby's due date. You apply to the Human Resources Department for maternity leave using an Application for Maternity Leave Form ML1. A certificate from your doctor must be attached to the leave form. The certificate must confirm the pregnancy and specify the expected week of confinement.

1.3. Health & Safety

In the workplace there may be risks that may affect your health and safety and that of your unborn child. There are specific regulations that require the Institute as an employer to protect the health and safety of expectant mothers.

Under Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 Pregnant Employees Regulations, a risk assessment/job assessment must be conducted at departmental level in relation to the impact of work on the person/unborn child.

You must complete the job risk assessment form (which can be found on the website under the Health & Safety section), in conjunction with your line manager and submit this to the HR Department.

You may also be entitled to Health & Safety Leave if you are exposed to certain risks in the workplace during pregnancy or while breastfeeding. During this leave you may be entitled to Health & Safety Benefit which is a weekly payment for women who are granted Health & Safety Leave under the Maternity Protection Act, 1994. For more information please consult the Maternity Leave Policy.

1.4. Your Rights at Work

Pregnancy is not an illness and you do not suddenly become less capable of doing your job. The two main acts that give you rights during pregnancy and maternity are the Maternity Protection Acts, 1994 and 2002 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998 and 2004. During Pregnancy you should receive:

- The same work duties and responsibilities, unless changes arise from unrelated restructuring of work activity or adjustments that are necessary for your health and safety
- Paid time off to attend antenatal appointments
- The same training and promotional opportunities as other staff
- The health and safety risk assessment
- Access to the usual contractual sick pay arrangements for any pregnancy related absence.

1.5. Antenatal Care

You have a statutory right to reasonable paid time off to attend appointments for antenatal and postnatal care once accompanied by a certificate to confirm appointments. As far as is reasonably possible, these appointments should be made at times that cause least disruption to your work schedule.

Fathers are entitled to paid leave to attend two ante-natal classes, immediately prior to the birth. The same evidence of attendance will be required, as is currently required for mothers.

1.6. Staff on Fixed Term Contracts

If your contract of employment is due to expire during your maternity leave you should talk to your line manager and the HR Department as soon as possible to review this contract. If a contract renewal is not possible than you may still be entitled to paid maternity leave and maternity benefit from the Department of Social Welfare up to the end date of your contract.

1.7. Maternity Cover

The line Manager will assess the requirements of the department over the period of leave. When this assessment has been carried out they should complete a recruitment request form and submit to the HR Department.

2. TAKING MATERNITY LEAVE

2.1. Maternity Leave Entitlement

Under the maternity legislation all women are entitled to 42 weeks maternity leave. Payment of maternity leave may be sourced both from the Department of Social Welfare and/or the Institute. The 42 week entitlement is divided into 26 weeks paid and an additional 16 weeks unpaid. Entitlements to paid leave and unpaid leave are outlined in the Institutes maternity leave policy. You are strongly encouraged to read the maternity policy which sets out in detail all the provisions to which you are entitled to.

Please note, hourly-paid staff are not entitled to paid maternity leave from the Institute. This does not affect their statutory right to maternity leave.

2.2. Maternity Pay

If you pay Class D PRSI you may be granted full pay from the Institute whilst on maternity leave. If you pay Class A1 PRSI you must fill in the MB1 form and the Human Resources Department must fill in the MB2 form. Both forms need to be returned directly to:-

Maternity Benefit Section,
Social Welfare Services,
McCarter's Road,
Buncrana, Co. Donegal.

The standard amount of €245.00 will be deducted from salary for 26 weeks. The maternity benefit payment should be sent directly to the staff member's bank account. For further information please consult the Maternity Leave Policy.

2.3. Pension

While on paid maternity leave, staff who are members of a pension scheme will continue to be a member of the relevant pension scheme. If you avail of the period of unpaid maternity leave this will not be considered pensionable. Employees should contact the Superannuation section of the HR Department for further information.

2.4. Holiday Entitlement

Non-academic staff will accrue annual leave during paid and unpaid maternity leave. You will also be entitled to public holidays that fall during the 26 week period of paid maternity leave and these will be added to the end of the period of maternity leave. If you are availing of additional unpaid maternity leave you will be entitled to annual leave and payment of public holidays which fall within the period of unpaid maternity leave. You should refer to the Maternity Leave policy for further details on how your leave can be taken.

2.5. Keeping in Touch Days

While on Maternity Leave you are entitled by agreement with your Head of Department/line Manager to work for a maximum 3 Keep in Touch Days (KIT) for which be added on to the end of the maternity leave period as additional leave. The type of work undertaken is a matter for agreement between both parties – the days may be used for any activity which would ordinarily be classed as work under your contract of employment.

2.6. Extension of Maternity Leave & Benefits in the Event of Premature Births

From 1st October 2017, the period for which maternity benefit is paid is being extended in cases where a baby is born prematurely. The extended period of benefit will be equivalent to the duration between the actual date of birth of the premature baby and the date when the maternity leave was expected to commence (i.e. ordinarily two weeks before the expected date of birth). This new measure, which takes effect for premature babies born on or after Sunday, 1st October, will increase the duration of maternity leave and the associated maternity benefit to be paid in cases where a baby is born prematurely.

3. RETURNING TO WORK

3.1. Return Date

The Institute will assume that you are going to return to work on the anticipated return date that you provide prior to the commencement of your maternity leave. If you wish to amend this date or return prior to the end of your maternity period you must give at least four weeks' notice before the expected return to work date.

3.2. Breastfeeding

The provision for women to breastfeed at work was brought into effect on the 18th October, 2004 through SI 654 of 2004 Maternity Protection (Protection of Mothers who are Breastfeeding) Regulations 2004. If you are breastfeeding your child you are entitled, without loss of pay, to a reduction in working hours of one hour each day, until your child is 6 months old (26 weeks). The break, or reduction in hours, may be taken as one break of 60 minutes, two breaks of 30 minutes each, or three breaks of 20 minutes each, or in such a manner agreed between you and the line manager. The Institute has made available facilities on campus for breastfeeding. Please contact the HR Department for further information.

3.3. Flexible Working

AIT accommodates a number of flexible working schemes including, but not limited to flexitime, Job Sharing, changing your working hours, part-time working or unpaid leave.

Flexible working is not an automatic right and requests can be refused if there is a clear business reason for doing so. You need to have a discussion with your line manager to explore all possible options that may be available.

3.4. Parental Leave

Under the Parental Leave Policy you can apply for unpaid leave up to 22 weeks per qualifying child. Leave can be taken in respect of a child up to 13 years of age (from 1st January 2015). For more information see the Parental Leave Policy.

3.5. Parents Leave

Parents leave is a statutory entitlement for parents. Each parent is entitled to two weeks parent's leave for a child born or adopted on or after 1st November 2019.

If you have any queries in relation to this booklet please email hr@ait.ie